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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2005

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL
Blue Stream Officially Opens- Hurriyet
Tense Funeral in Yuksekova - Hurriyet
Edinburgh Recognizes Armenian Genocide - Hurriyet
FIFA Convicts Turkey Without Trial - Sabah
Turkey Briefs US After Gul's Damascus Visit - Sabah
US Urges Denmark to Close Roj-TV - Milliyet
Blue Stream Turns Dream to Reality - Turkiye
Dogan Group Takes Over Star TV - Star
Funeral Under Shadow of F-16s in Yuksekova - Posta
Gul: I did not Carry Third Country's Message to Syria -
Vatan

OPINION MAKERS

Energy Summit in Samsun - Radikal
Gul Says Syria Visit was to Discuss Regional Issues -
Radikal
Scottish People Recognize Armenian Genocide - Radikal
Gul: I went to Syria to Discuss Stability - Cumhuriyet
US Base on Romania's Black Sea Coast - Cumhuriyet
Turkey to become World Energy Center - Yeni Safak
US Offers Turkey Cooperation in Black Sea - Yeni Safak
New Pipeline Offer from Putin - Zaman
Majority of Americans Approve Torture during Interrogation -
Zaman

BRIEFING

Gul's Visit to Syria: Foreign Minister Gul denied media reports yesterday that he had conveyed Washington's message to Assad during his visit to Damascus earlier this week. Gul said that it is Turkey's responsibility to prevent regional issues from becoming chronic. FM Gul said that 'the UN Commission plans to carry out its investigation in the Hariri assassination. There have been some problems in this regard. I shared Turkey's view on this issue with Assad, but I made no demands. Turkey will fulfill its duties, but we believe that the main task falls to UN officials.' "Sabah" reports that Turkey briefed the US on the visit following the Foreign Minister's return. After being briefed by Turkish officials, US Charge McEldowney told a group of reporters that the US wants to see concrete steps that indicate the Syrian regime is addressing the requirements of the international community - full cooperation with the UN report, support for regional stability, ending support for terrorism, and progress on democratic reform.

Tensions in Hakkari: All papers give extensive coverage to the funeral for three protestors who died on Tuesday in Yuksekova during clashes with security forces. Around 50,000 attended the funerals, and many chanted slogans in support of the PKK and imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan. Two F-16 fighter jets and a military helicopter flew over the crowd as a precaution against PKK militants trying to cross the border. "Hurriyet" notes that security forces did not leave their barracks during the ceremony in order to avoid tension. "Sabah" reports that security at

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the funeral was provided by 2,000 activists from pro-Kurdish DEHAP.

Blue Stream Pipeline Officially Opens: All papers covered the ceremony held yesterday to inaugurate the Blue Stream pipeline that carries natural gas from Russia to Turkey via the Black Sea. Prime Minister Erdogan hosted Russian President Vladimir Putin and Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi in Samsun for the opening ceremony. In his remarks, PM Erdogan urged that the project be expanded so that the gas can be transported all the way to the Mediterranean port city of Ceyhan, and from there to Israel through an undersea pipeline or on tankers as liquefied natural gas (LNG). Erdogan also urged the Russian leader to support a Samsun-Ceyhan oil pipeline project that would transport Russian and Kazakh oil to international markets by bypassing the overcrowded Bosphorus Straits. Erdogan argued that Turkey's becoming an important energy corridor will contribute to regional peace.

Europeans Criticize PM Erdogan: A high-level European official told "Sabah" that PM Erdogan's comments criticizing Denmark for allowing a Danish newspaper to publish cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed were 'worrying and discriminatory.' 'What is holy to some is not to others,' the official noted. 'Should we outlaw cartoons depicting women without headscarves just because they might offend people from Iran or Saudi Arabia?' Meanwhile, EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn expressed support for Danish PM Rasmussen on the issue of Roj-TV. "Milliyet" reports that Rehn said there has been no evidence presented to suggest that Roj-TV has a connection to the PKK. Rehn criticized PM Erdogan's decision to walk out of a joint press conference in Copenhagen because of the presence of a Roj-TV reporter: 'In this case, the Prime Minister should have tried to look at the issue more as a European leader,' he said.

US Supports Turkey on Roj-TV Issue: Several papers and the all-news channel CNN-Turk report that the United States has intervened with Denmark to support Turkey's request that the Danish Government close down Roj-TV, which the Turks claim

has ties to the outlawed PKK. US Charge McElDowney told reporters yesterday that 'the US has an initiative to try to cut off PKK financing, propaganda, and front groups by working with our European friends.' Turkish sources revealed that the US initiative included support for Turkey on the specific issue of Roj-TV.

Assistant Secretary Flory Proposed Black Sea Cooperation: Islamist-oriented "Yeni Safak" claims that Assistant Secretary of Defense Peter Flory proposed during last weeks

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high-level defense talks that the US and Turkey establish a 'security net' in the Black Sea. The report asserts that the arrangement would include a coordination mechanism between Incirlik Air Base and US base in Romania, Bulgaria, and Georgia. The aim of the project would be to strengthen efforts to counter terrorism and trafficking in persons, weapons, and drugs. It would also strengthen security in the Black Sea and provide a platform for rapid intervention in the Balkans and the Caucasus. The initiative would entail additional US ships going into the Black Sea, and joint military exercises in the region. "Yeni Safak" claims that Turkey gave 'provisional approval' to the idea within the framework of the Montreux Convention that regulates the use of the Bosphorus Straits.

Supreme Court Prosecutor Warns on Statements Against Constitution: Nuri Ok, Chairman of the Turkish Supreme Court (Yargitay) said yesterday that the Court is

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'continuously following the activities' of Turkey's political parties. He urged the parties to 'avoid targeting the constitutional system, the secular state, and modern values.' The media widely interpreted Ok's comments as a warning to the Prime Minister, who reportedly commented that 'only the Islamic religious community' has the authority to pass judgment on the headscarf issue. Asked specifically about Erdogan's comments, Ok said that 'statements regarding the European Court's decision about the headscarf ban must remain within the bounds of the law.'

EDITORIAL OPINION: Syria

"The US and Damascus"

Mustafa Balbay argued in the leftist-nationalist "Cumhuriyet" (11/18): "Frustrated by the deadlock in Baghdad, the US has started looking for an exit strategy that goes through Damascus. The transition to democracy in Iraq has only led to growing violence, and the US is in need of a 'success' at all costs. . Shortly after the Hariri assassination, the US named Syria as the killer. Now the US is trying to make that accusation stick. It seems that the plan is to link the Hariri murder investigation and trial to an effort to 'democratize' Syria. This would involve a process of occupying, toppling the regime, and establishing a new one, and the US seems to be looking for a reason to start. . The US statement about the Turkish Foreign Minister's sudden visit to Damascus asserted that Turkey and the US 'share the same views' on Syria. Adding Syria to the list of problems in our neighborhood will not serve Turkey's interest at all. We should be very careful about offering Turkey to play the role of messenger."

"Syria"

Yilmaz Oztuna wrote in the conservative "Turkiye" (11/18): "The Middle East cannot endure a war in Syria after what has happened in Iraq. This argument is theoretically sound, but the fact of the matter is that the US is the only one who can make that decision. On the other hand, Turkey should not engage in any effort to present itself as the 'savior' of Syria, as this would put Ankara and Washington on opposite sides of the issue. The Baath administration in Syria is one of the cruelest regimes in recent history. In

the past, it was Syria that trained and sheltered terrorists to destabilize Turkey. For now, Damascus has abandoned that policy. But we still haven't seen an apology. Syria has not made any attempt to correct its maps that show certain parts of Turkish territory as if they belonged to Syria. Our policy in Iraq was a failure, and as consequences of that we now face a new state of Kurdistan, the resurrection of PKK terrorism, and the denial of the existence of the Turkmen. Turkey cannot withstand the consequences of another 'March 1 disaster' (editor's note: reference is being made to the Turkish parliament's refusal to allow US troops to pass through Turkey and into Iraq in 2003). Syria should make every effort to adapt itself to the modern world and work on radical reforms as quickly as possible."

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